



RENTERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

February 17, 2016

A meeting of the Renters Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, February 17, 2016, at 5:50 pm, in Town Hall Room 115, Main Floor, Vancouver City Hall.

PRESENT: Alvin Singh, Chair
Karen Ameyaw
Miran Aziz
John Brabbins
Nicola Hill, Vice-Chair
Parveen Khtaria
Jane Mayfield
Mira Oreck
Joshua Prowse
Noah Quastel
Karen Sawatzky*
Meseret Taye

ABSENT: Peter Harvie
David Isaac
Daniel Oleksiuk (Leave of Absence)

ALSO PRESENT: Abigail Bond, Director, Housing Policy and Projects
(Staff Liaison)

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Lori Isfeld, Meeting Coordinator

* Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

Leave of Absence Requests

MOVED by Nicola Hill
SECONDED by Mira Oreck

THAT the Renters Advisory Committee approve a leave of absence for Daniel Oleksiuk for this meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Karen Sawatzky absent for the vote)

Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Miran Aziz

SECONDED by Mira Oreck

THAT the minutes of the Renters Advisory Committee meeting of November 19, 2015, be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

(Karen Sawatsky absent for the vote)

1. Pet-Friendly Rentals

The Chair reviewed proposals regarding pet-friendly rentals put forward for consideration during a presentation by Celine Mauboules, Senior Planner, Housing Policy and Projects, at the regular meeting on November 19, 2015. Abigail Bond, Director, Housing Policy and Projects, provided additional information related to pet-friendly rental issues, and responded to questions.

Following discussion, it was

MOVED by Mira Oreck

SECONDED by Nicola Hill

- A. THAT the Renters Advisory Committee supports the following proposals put forward in the presentation by Housing Policy staff entitled “Pets in Rental Housing”, which took place at the Committee’s regular meeting on November 19, 2015:
- Continue to allow pets in directly managed, city-owned non-market housing;
 - Work with non-profit sector to allow pets in non-market rental buildings;
 - Work with Landlord BC and other private sector partners to consider allowing pets through education campaign.
- B. THAT the Renters Advisory Committee recommends tabling the following proposals put forward in the above-noted presentation:
- Request the Province amend the Residential Tenancy Act to prohibit the banning of pets;
 - Request an amendment to the Strata Act’s Standard by-laws to remove reference to pet size and number restrictions.

FURTHER THAT the Renters Advisory Committee requests additional information from staff in order to better consider the two proposals set out above, including:

- Which jurisdictions do not have any restrictions and what has been the impact?
- Investigate the spectrum of what pets can be; can there be different restrictions for certain pets?
- What are the reasons landlords and strata councils ban pets?
- How do tenants feel about changing the restrictions?
- How many people own pets and can't find housing?
- How would an increase in pet ownership impact public space and amenities?
- What are the environmental impacts of making it easier to own pets?
- What percentage of rental listings allows pets?
- Is the City willing to offer incentives to buildings that allow pets?

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Renting it Right

Jane Mayfield, in her capacity as Executive Director of the Tenants' Resource and Advisory Centre, provided a presentation on the online course "Renting it Right" for renters, which was launched a month ago. Ms. Mayfield responded to questions and noted a second part to the course is being considered.

Discussion and feedback ensued. Ms. Bond agreed to add a link to the course on the City's website. Ms. Mayfield concluded by encouraging Committee members to spread the word about the course.

The Renting it Right course is available online at <http://www.rentingitright.ca/>.

3. Liaisons Reports

Ms. Bond provided an update regarding the report entitled "Increased Protection for Renters - Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy and Associated Guidelines", that was dealt with by City Council on December 10, 2015.

4. Workplan

The Chair reviewed the draft workplan and results of the survey recently completed by Committee members regarding their areas of interest. Following a round table discussion, it was agreed the Chair will group the survey results into categories and that further discussion

and decisions on the final workplan will be included on the agenda for the March 16, 2016 working session meeting.

5. New Business

The Committee briefly discussed the status of the City's Housing Strategy. It was agreed that members will email their questions on the subject to the Staff Liaisons.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Nicola Hill
SECONDED by Meseret Taye

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Next Meetings:

DATES: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 (Working Session)
Wednesday, April 13, 2016 (Regular Meeting)
TIME: 5:45 pm
PLACE: Committee Room 1
Third Floor, Vancouver City Hall

The Committee adjourned at 7:31 pm.

* * * * *